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 www.vermont.com

A MAN FOR ALL
FABLES

VOTE



for

MAYOR

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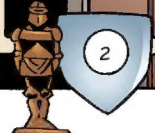
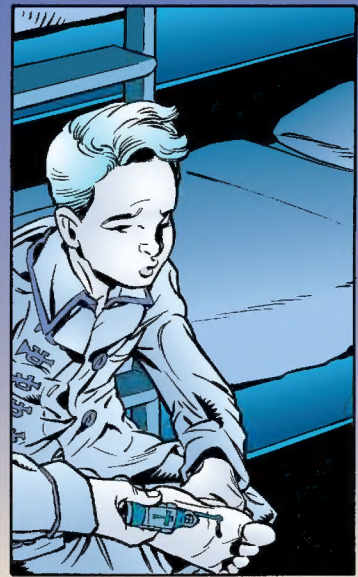
RED, WHITE AND BLUE

CHAPTER TWO ◦ MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS

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NO NEED--?

BUT I'M
WOUNDED!

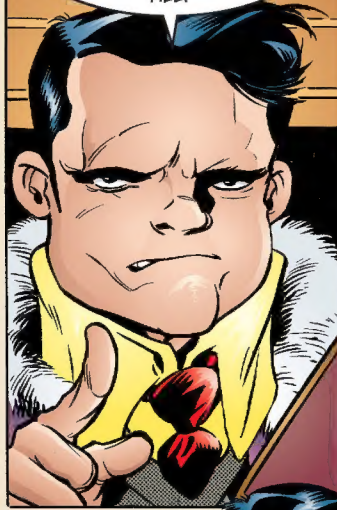
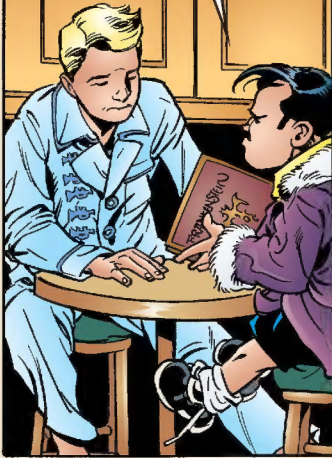
I'VE TWO
POINTS WORTH
MAKING, **BOTH**
OF WHICH CAN BE SAID
AT A REASONABLE
VOLUME.

FIRST, I'M NOT
THE ONE WHO SET UP MY
WOODEN SOLDIER COLLECTION
ALL OVER THE BEDROOM
FLOOR.

THEY'RE THE **ONLY**
POSSESSION I WAS ABLE TO
BRING OUT OF THE HOMELANDS
WITH ME, CARVED BY MY OWN
FATHER, GEPEETO, WHO
NEVER MADE IT OUT AT
ALL.

AS SUCH, THEY'RE
THE ONLY THINGS I HAVE TO
STILL REMEMBER MY DAD, WHO
FOR ALL I KNOW MAY BE DEAD--
OR EVEN WORSE--**ENSLAVED**
ALL THESE YEARS.

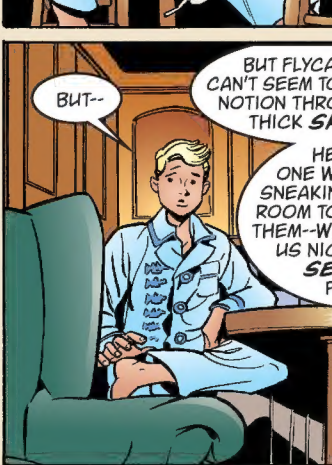
FOR EXACTLY
THAT REASON, I TREASURE
THEM TOO MUCH TO TREAT
AS MERE TOYS.



BUT--

BUT FLYCATCHER
CAN'T SEEM TO GET THAT
NOTION THROUGH HIS
THICK **SKULL**.

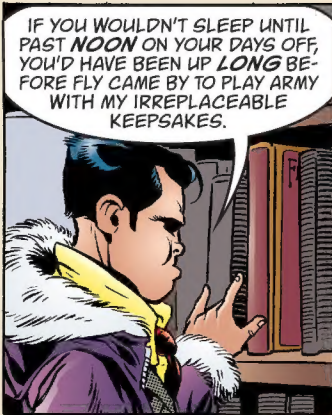
HE'S THE
ONE WHO KEEPS
SNEAKING INTO OUR
ROOM TO **PLAY** WITH
THEM--WHICH BRINGS
US NICELY TO MY
SECOND
POINT.



IF YOU WOULDN'T SLEEP UNTIL
PAST **NOON** ON YOUR DAYS OFF,
YOU'D HAVE BEEN UP **LONG** BEFORE
FLY CAME BY TO PLAY ARMY
WITH MY IRREPLACEABLE
KEEPSAKES.

SPEAKING
OF WHICH, FLY
HAD A MESSAGE
FOR YOU.

THERE'S
SOME SORT OF BIG
COMMOTION DOWN IN
THE BUSINESS OFFICE,
AND BIGGY WANTS YOU
DOWN THERE AS
SOON AS YOU
WAKE UP.





"AFTER THE FALL OF THE
KEEP AT WORLD'S END, I
WAS CAPTURED ALIVE BY
THE EMPEROR'S SOLDIERS.

"FOR A FEW WEEKS THEY
USED ME LIKE SOLDIERS
ALWAYS TREAT CAPTURED
WOMEN."

STORM'S
COMING.

BIG
ONE.

BULLFINCH
STREET

THEN
THEY SENT ME
BACK INTO SLAVERY,
WHICH I ENDURED FOR ALL
THESE CENTURIES. EVENTU-
ALLY I EARNED THEIR
TRUST AGAIN, AND WAS
ABLE TO MAKE MY
ESCAPE.

I FLED TO
THE OZ GATEWAY,
WHICH LINKS TO YOUR
NORTHERN LAND OF
KANDA.


CANADA.

TWO OF
YOUR FABLE GARRISON
STARTED OUT TO ACCOMPANY
ME FROM THE NORTHERN GATE,
BUT THEY WERE KILLED BY
GOBLINS THAT AMBUSHED
US.



I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE WAS STILL ON MY TRAIL, BUT THEY MUST HAVE FOLLOWED ME THROUGH THE GATE.

IN ANY CASE, THEY WERE ALL KILLED, FABLES AND GOBS ALIKE, AND I GOT AWAY.



MAKING YOUR WAY HERE ALL ON YOUR OWN?

YES.



THAT'S A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT, MISS RIDING HOOD.



YOU'RE THE **FIRST** FABLE TO ESCAPE FROM THE HOMELANDS IN MORE THAN A CENTURY.

DO YOU HAVE ANY **IDEA** WHAT EFFECT YOUR ARRIVAL IS GOING TO HAVE ON THE **MORALE** OF THE COMMUNITY?



WHAT EFFECT IT'S **ALREADY** HAD?



I DON'T EXPECT ANY SPECIAL ATTENTION.

WELL, YOU'RE GOING TO **GET** IT.



YOU'LL BE THE **TOAST** OF THE TOWN!



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR HISTORY, THE FABLETOWN OFFERS ARE FULL TO OVERFLOWING.

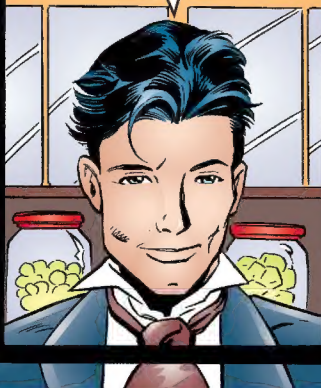
THE MONEY HAS WELL AND TRULY ROLLED IN, BUT IS ANY OF IT ROLLING BACK OUT AGAIN, TO ENRICH THE LIVES OF US MERE CITIZENS?

NO. OF COURSE NOT. OUR BELOVED MAYOR--WHO MUST STILL THINK HE'S A KING WITH DICTATORIAL POWERS--IS HOLDING TIGHT TO THE COMMUNITY PURSE STRINGS.

IT'S AS THOUGH HE IMAGINES ALL OF THE MONEY TO BE HIS.

AND WHILE HE'S RICHER THAN CROESUS, WE'RE LEFT TO FEND FOR OURSELVES, TO FAIL OR PROSPER, WITH NO HELP FROM OUR ELECTED GOVERNMENT.

MEANWHILE, OUT IN THE MUNDY, THEY'RE TAKEN CARE OF FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE.





IF MUNDY LOSES HIS JOB, THERE'S WELFARE.

IF MUNDY GETS SICK, ALL HE HAS TO DO IS SHOW UP AT THE NEAREST HOSPITAL, WHERE HE CAN'T BE TURNED AWAY, BECAUSE MEDICAL HELP IS MANDATORY.



IF MUNDY'S NOT ABLE TO GET INTO THE SCHOOL, OR SPORTS EVENT, OR SOCIAL CLUB HE WANTS TO JOIN, HE CAN **SUE**, AND HIS GOVERNMENT WILL **FORCE** THE OFFENDING INSTITUTION TO OPEN ITS DOORS TO HIM.



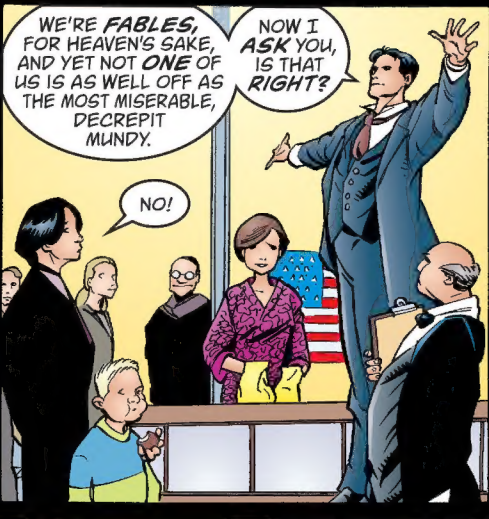
EVEN IF HE SPILLS A CUP OF COFFEE ON HIMSELF, HE CAN SUE FOR A MILLION BUCKS.

MISTER MUNDY IS CARED FOR BY HIS GOVERNMENT.



BUT HERE IN FABLETOWN, IT'S A DIFFERENT STORY ALTOGETHER.

WHEN SOME MISFORTUNE HAPPENS TO ONE OF US, IT'S "TOO BAD, BUT YOU BETTER FIND A WAY TO FIX IT FAST, OR IT'S OFF TO THE FARM WITH YOU."



WE'RE FABLES, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, AND YET NOT ONE OF US IS AS WELL OFF AS THE MOST MISERABLE, DECREPIT MUNDY.

NOW I ASK YOU, IS THAT RIGHT?

NO!



IS THAT THE WAY THINGS OUGHT TO BE?

NO!

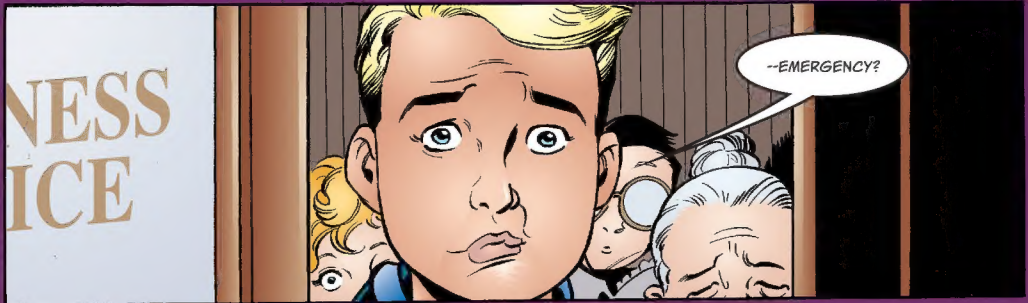




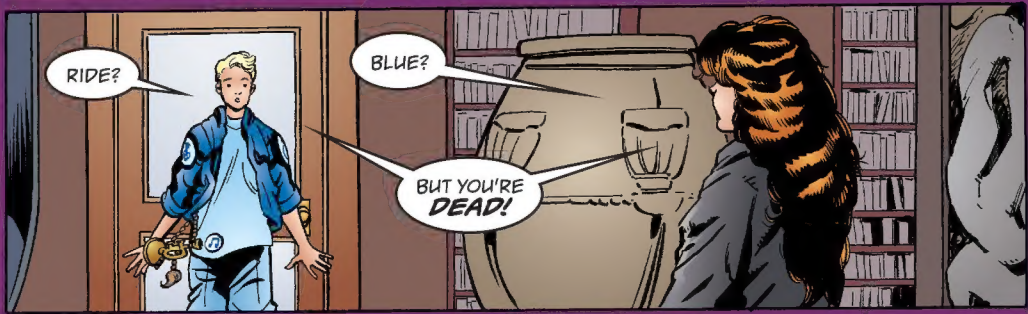
ABOUT TIME.

WHO--?

OKAY, SHERIFF, I'M HERE. WHAT'S THE BIG--



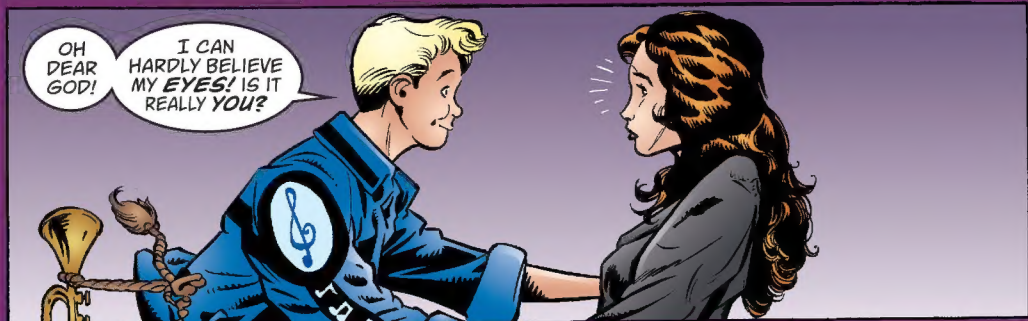
--EMERGENCY?



RIDE?

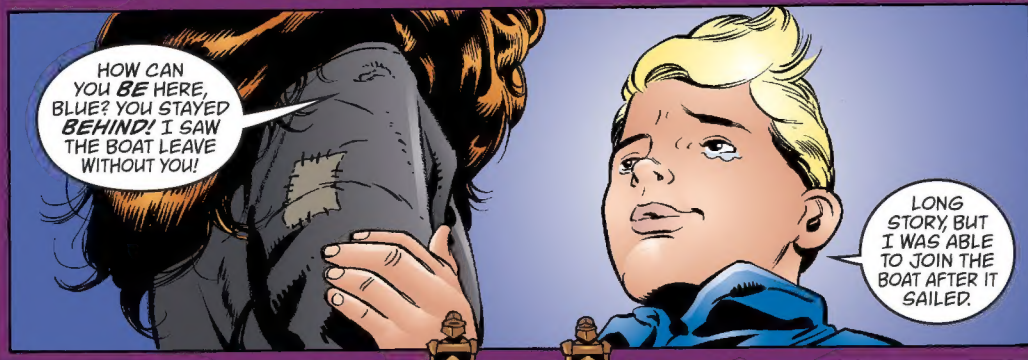
BLUE?

BUT YOU'RE DEAD!



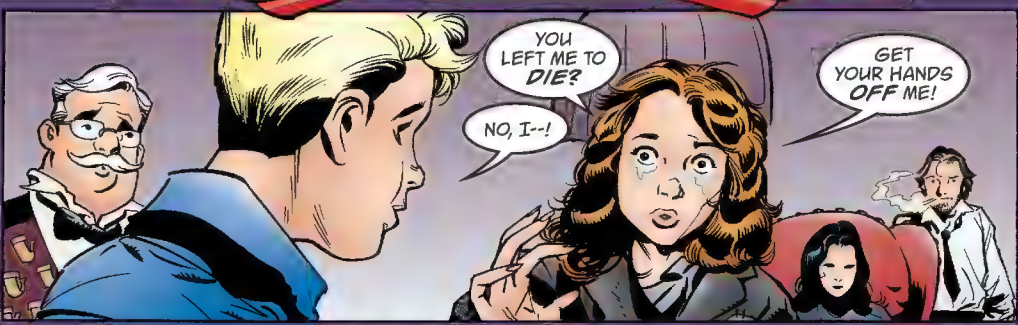
OH DEAR GOD!

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE MY EYES! IS IT REALLY YOU?



HOW CAN YOU BE HERE, BLUE? YOU STAYED BEHIND! I SAW THE BOAT LEAVE WITHOUT YOU!

LONG STORY, BUT I WAS ABLE TO JOIN THE BOAT AFTER IT SAILED.



YOU LEFT ME TO DIE?

GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME!

NO, I--!



BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE ON THE BOAT.

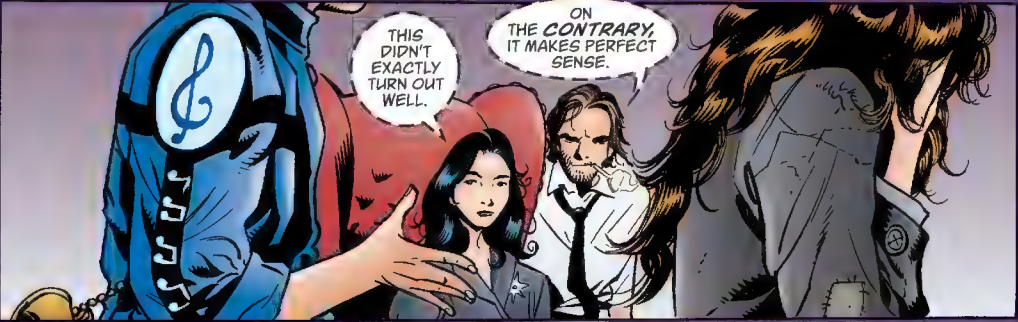
STAY AWAY! I NEED TO THINK THIS THROUGH.



YOU ABANDONED ME BLUE, AFTER USING ME FOR THE NIGHT--JUST THE WAY THEIR SOLDIERS TREATED ME.

AT LEAST THEY HAD THE COURTESY NOT TO PRETEND LOVE HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT.

I NEVER--!



THIS DIDN'T EXACTLY TURN OUT WELL.

ON THE CONTRARY, IT MAKES PERFECT SENSE.



IT'S PRECISELY THE RIGHT MOVE FOR HER TO MAKE.

SHOULD YOU GOOD PEOPLE OF FABLETOWN SEE FIT TO ELECT ME AS YOUR **NEW** MAYOR, I'LL INSTITUTE IMMEDIATE AND **SWEEPING** CHANGES.

EDWARD BEAR'S CANDIES

THE FIRST THING THE **NEW** ADMINISTRATION WILL DO IS FUND **FREE GLAMOURS** FOR ANYONE WHO NEEDS THEM.

NO MORE WILL FABLES BE SHIPPED OFF TO THE FARM JUST FOR LOOKING A **TOUCH** INHUMAN.

AND HOW ABOUT GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED **TRANSFORMATIONS** FOR ANY FARM FABLE WHO MIGHT WANT TO END CENTURIES OF UNFAIR **CONFINEMENT** UP THERE?

TURNING THEM **HUMAN**?

WHAT IF THEY DON'T **WANNA** BE HUMAN?

IT WORKED FOR **BIGBY**, SO WHY NOT EVERYONE ELSE?

THEY CAN **ALWAYS** RETURN TO THE SAFETY OF THE FARM DURING THOSE TIMES WHEN THEY WANT TO RESUME BEING A **PIGGY**, OR **DUCK**, OR **BILLY GOAT**.

MY FELLOW CITIZENS, IT'S TIME TO MAKE A **PROACTIVE** DECISION FOR THE **FUTURE** OF FABLETOWN.

IF YOU WANT TO HELP USHER IN A NEW **GOLDEN AGE**, SIMPLY **SIGN** THE PETITION.



RED HOTS!



GET YOUR RED HOTS HERE!

WHAT ARE "RED HOTS" AND WHY ARE YOU SHOUTING AT ME?

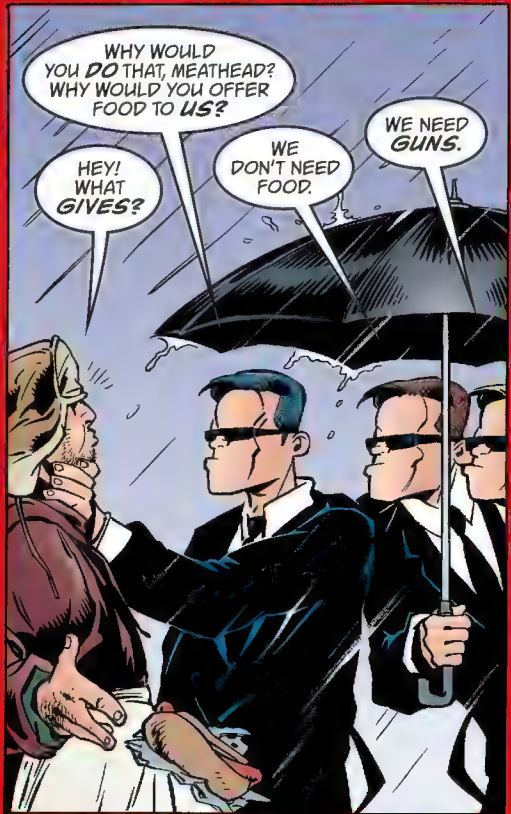


TOURISTS, HUH?

FOOD?

HE IS OFFERING US FOOD?

SPICY HOT DOGS. THE BEST TREAT IN TOWN.



WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT, MEATHEAD? WHY WOULD YOU OFFER FOOD TO US?

HEY! WHAT GIVES?

WE DON'T NEED FOOD.

WE NEED GUNS.



AND DIRECTIONS TO BULLFINCH STREET.

QUICKLY, MEAT! DIRECT US TO GUNS AND BULLFINCH STREET.

OR ELSE.

HELP! POLICE!

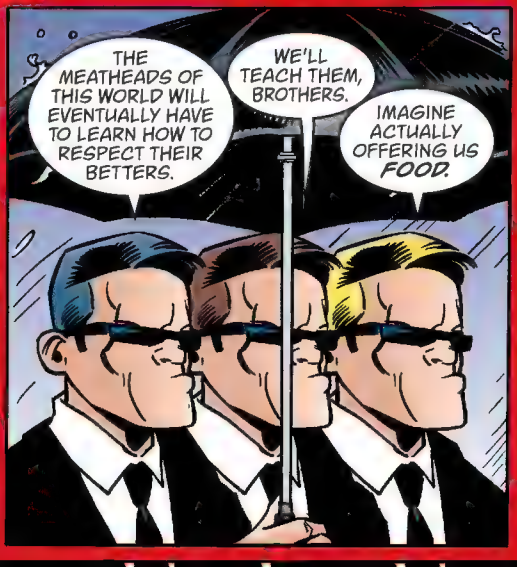
I'M BEING MUGGED HERE!



WE'D BEST GO, BROTHERS.

I AGREE, BROTHERS. OUR INSTRUCTIONS ARE TO AVOID CONTACT WITH MEAT-HEAD AUTHORITIES.

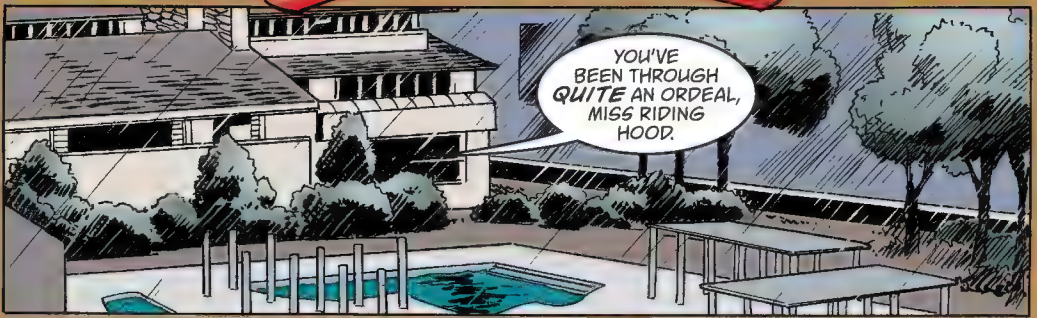
I AGREE, BROTHERS, THOUGH IT IRKS ME TO DISCONTINUE DISCIPLINING THAT IMPUDENT PEASANT.



THE MEATHEADS OF THIS WORLD WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE TO LEARN HOW TO RESPECT THEIR BETTERS.

WE'LL TEACH THEM, BROTHERS.

IMAGINE ACTUALLY OFFERING US FOOD.

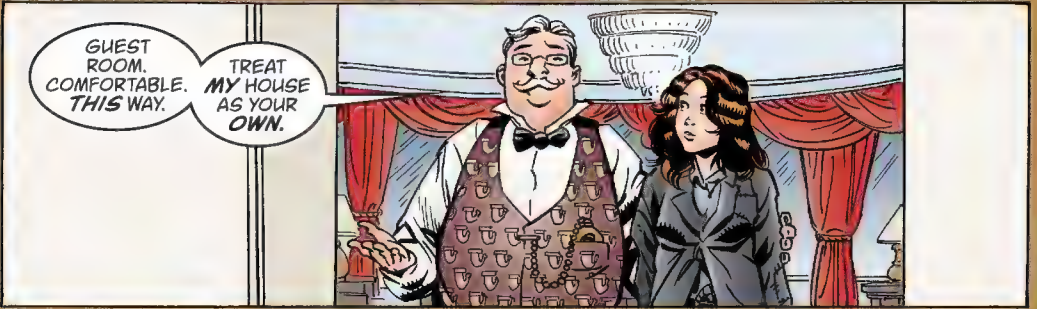


YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH QUITE AN ORDEAL, MISS RIDING HOOD.



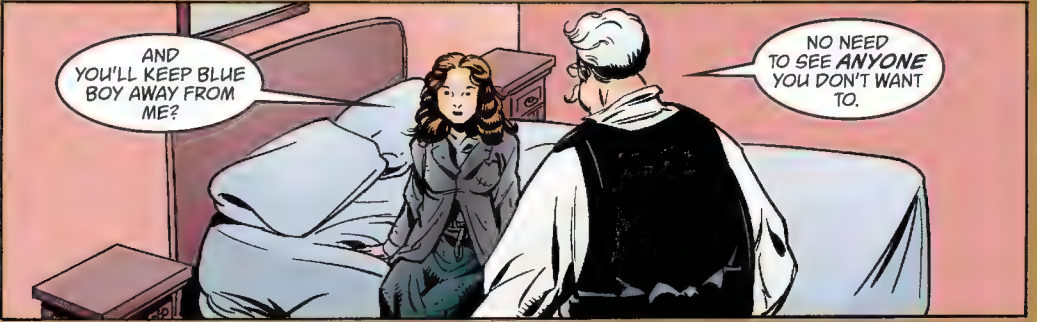
REST IS THE BEST THING FOR YOU NOW.

IT HAS BEEN SOME TIME SINCE I SLEPT. WHERE WILL I--?



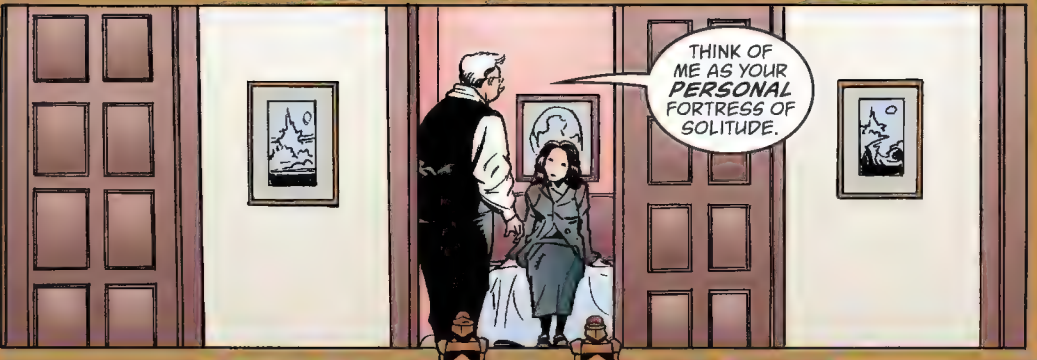
GUEST ROOM. COMFORTABLE. THIS WAY.

TREAT MY HOUSE AS YOUR OWN.

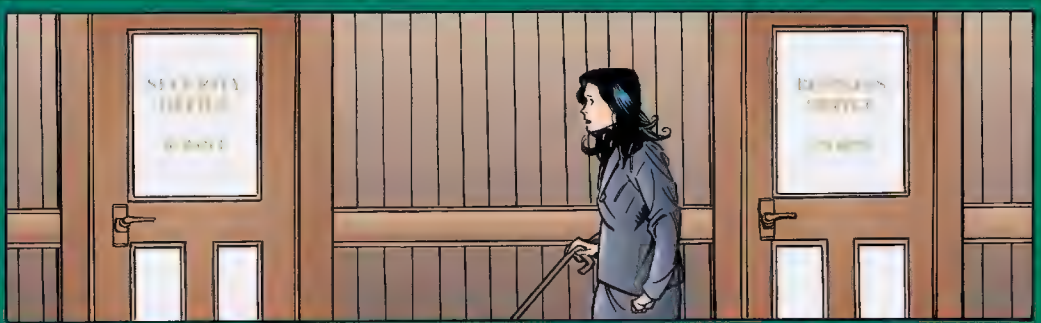


AND YOU'LL KEEP BLUE BOY AWAY FROM ME?

NO NEED TO SEE ANYONE YOU DON'T WANT TO.

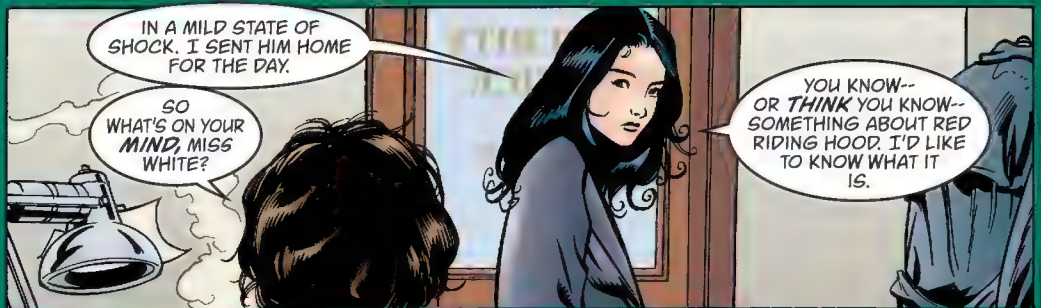


THINK OF ME AS YOUR PERSONAL FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE.



BIGBY,
WE NEED TO
TALK.

HOW'S
BOY
BLUE?



IN A MILD STATE OF
SHOCK, I SENT HIM HOME
FOR THE DAY.

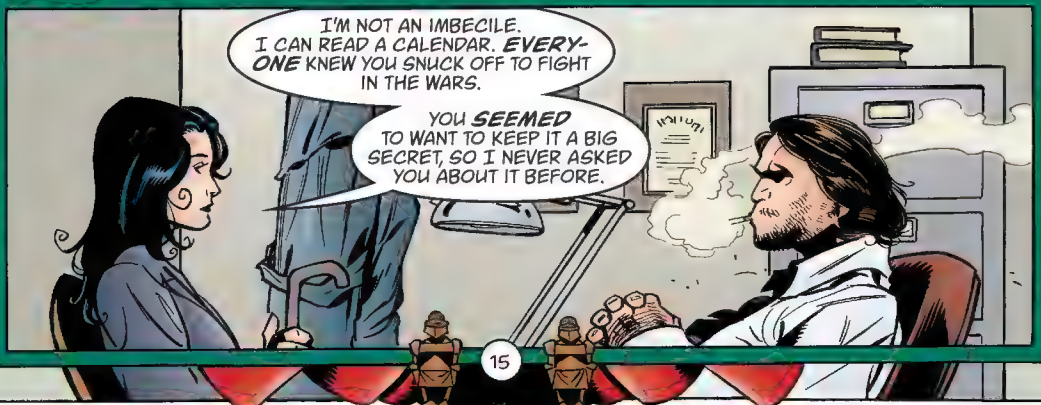
SO
WHAT'S ON YOUR
MIND, MISS
WHITE?

YOU KNOW--
OR *THINK* YOU KNOW--
SOMETHING ABOUT RED
RIDING HOOD. I'D LIKE
TO KNOW WHAT IT
IS.



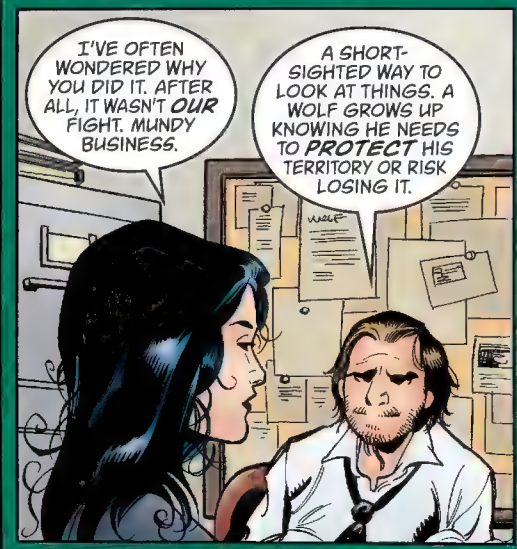
SURE. GRAB
A PEW. THIS MAY TAKE
A WHILE.

DO YOU KNOW
WHY I TOOK EXTENDED
LEAVES OF ABSENCE BACK
IN 1916, AND AGAIN IN
1939?



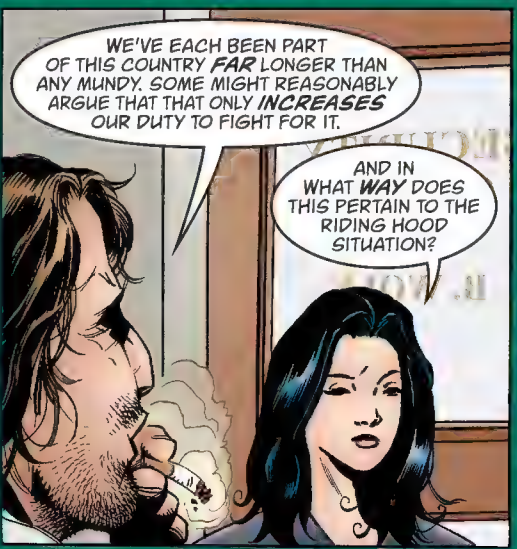
I'M NOT AN IMBECILE.
I CAN READ A CALENDAR. *EVERY-*
ONE KNEW YOU SNUCK OFF TO FIGHT
IN THE WARS.

YOU *SEEMED*
TO WANT TO KEEP IT A BIG
SECRET, SO I NEVER ASKED
YOU ABOUT IT BEFORE.



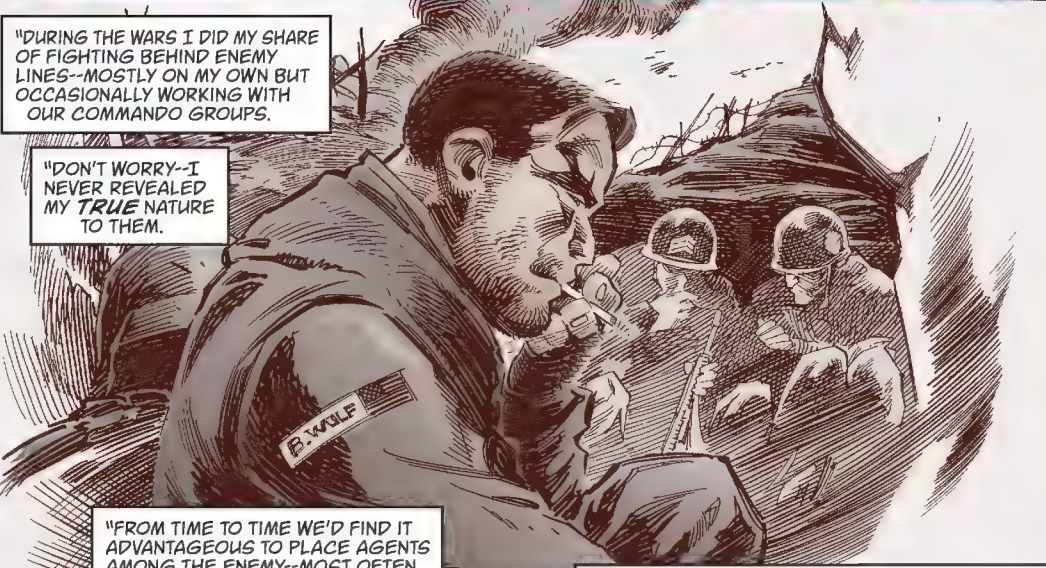
I'VE OFTEN WONDERED WHY YOU DID IT. AFTER ALL, IT WASN'T **OUR** FIGHT. MUNDY BUSINESS.

A SHORT-SIGHTED WAY TO LOOK AT THINGS. A WOLF GROWS UP KNOWING HE NEEDS TO **PROTECT** HIS TERRITORY OR RISK LOSING IT.



WE'VE EACH BEEN PART OF THIS COUNTRY **FAR** LONGER THAN ANY MUNDY. SOME MIGHT REASONABLY ARGUE THAT THAT ONLY **INCREASES** OUR DUTY TO FIGHT FOR IT.

AND IN WHAT **WAY** DOES THIS PERTAIN TO THE RIDING HOOD SITUATION?



"DURING THE WARS I DID MY SHARE OF FIGHTING BEHIND ENEMY LINES--MOSTLY ON MY OWN BUT OCCASIONALLY WORKING WITH OUR COMMANDO GROUPS.

"DON'T WORRY--I NEVER REVEALED MY **TRUE** NATURE TO THEM.

"FROM TIME TO TIME WE'D FIND IT ADVANTAGEOUS TO PLACE AGENTS AMONG THE ENEMY--MOST OFTEN POSING AS DEFECTORS.

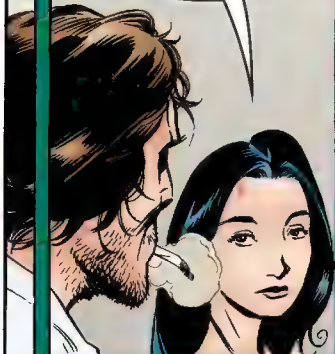
"ONE GOOD WAY TO ENSURE THOSE DEFECTORS WERE TAKEN AS LEGITIMATE WAS TO LITERALLY CHASE THEM INTO ENEMY HANDS, EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF PUTTING A BULLET OR TWO INTO THEM."



ICH BIN EIN DEUTSCHER-AMERIKANER! I DON'T WANT TO BE FIGHTING AGAINST MY OWN PEOPLE NO MORE! VERSTEHEN?

IT WAS A RISK, BUT NOTHING WAS SO CONVINCING TO THE BAD GUYS LIKE SOME POOR BASTARD WOUNDED IN THE PROCESS OF JOINING UP WITH THEM.

OH MY GOD, YOU THINK RIDING HOOD IS A *SPY*, PLACED HERE BY THE ADVERSARY.



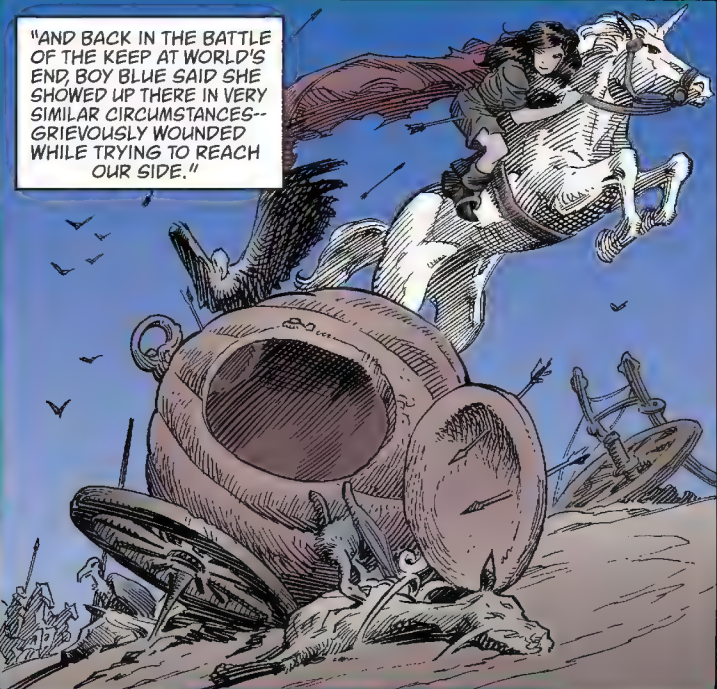
"YOU HEARD HER STORY. A CARLOAD OF GOBLINS TRIED TO KILL HER DURING HER GETAWAY, TO KEEP HER FROM REACHING US."



PRETTY *CONVINCING*, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?



"AND BACK IN THE BATTLE OF THE KEEP AT WORLD'S END, BOY BLUE SAID SHE SHOWED UP THERE IN VERY SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES--GRIEVOUSLY WOUNDED WHILE TRYING TO REACH OUR SIDE."



YOU THINK SHE WAS THE ADVERSARY'S SPY EVEN *THEN*?

THE ENEMY COMMANDER BACK THEN SWORE NO ONE WOULD BE TAKEN ALIVE WHEN THE GARRISON FELL. IN PREVIOUS BATTLES SUCH THREATS WERE ALWAYS CARRIED OUT.



"SO WHY DID THEY LET HER AND **ONLY** HER LIVE? DID THEY REALLY NEED ONE MORE **SCRUB** WOMAN SO DESPERATELY?"

"ALSO, THE CANADA GATE HAS BEEN BLOCKED FOR NEARLY TWO HUNDRED YEARS, AND IT WAS CLOSED FROM THE OTHER SIDE--BY THE ADVERSARY'S FORCES, NOT OURS."



WHO **OPENED** IT AGAIN? AND HOW DID SHE GET AWAY FROM THE CARLOAD OF GOBLINS?

SHE **TOLD** US. SHE DROVE AWAY AFTER THE TWO FABLE GUARDS FELL DEFENDING HER.

YEAH, AND WHO TAUGHT HER TO **DRIVE**? AND WHO PROVIDED THE **PURSUING** GOBS WITH A CAR OF THEIR OWN?

IT WAS ALL A **SETUP**?

"SOMEONE IN THE HOMELANDS CAREFULLY PREPARED EVERY PLAYER TO ACT HIS PART."

ONE PEDAL IS FOR MAKING THE MACHINE **GO**. ONE MAKES IT **STOP** AND THE THIRD IS NEEDED TO CHANGE GEARS.

WHAT'S **GEARS**?





BUT THEY OVERDID IT.

THIS IS JUST SUPPOSITION, THOUGH. NONE OF IT CONSTITUTES ACTUAL EVIDENCE.



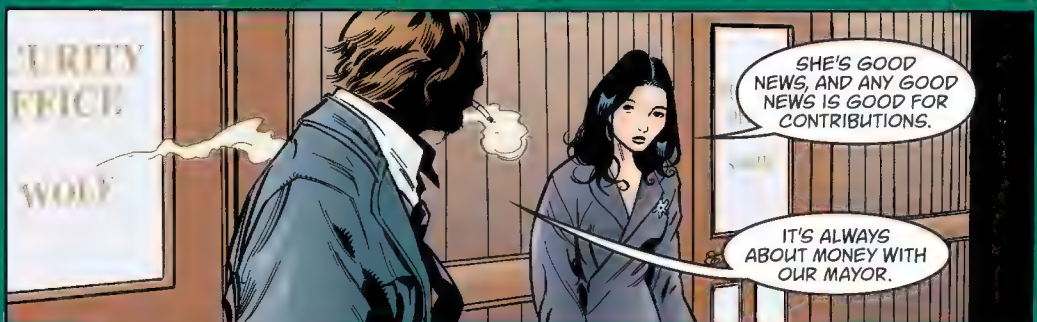
SURE. IT'S ALL JUST A BUNCH OF SUSPICIONS SO FAR, AND I'M NATURALLY SUSPICIOUS. BUT IT'S WORTH LOOKING INTO, WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?

SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?



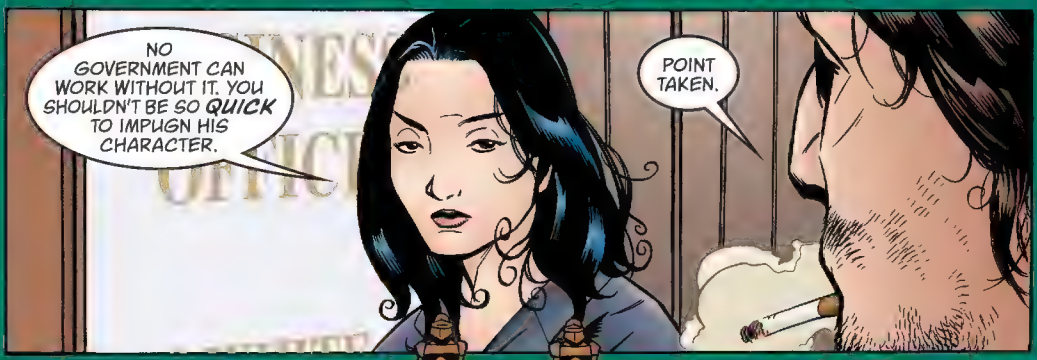
SNIFF AROUND.

IN THE MEANTIME, YOU NEED TO RIDE HERD ON KING COLE. HE'S A BIT TOO DELIGHTED WITH OUR NEW ARRIVAL—READY TO GRANT HER IMMEDIATE FABLE CITIZENSHIP.



SHE'S GOOD NEWS, AND ANY GOOD NEWS IS GOOD FOR CONTRIBUTIONS.

IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT MONEY WITH OUR MAYOR.



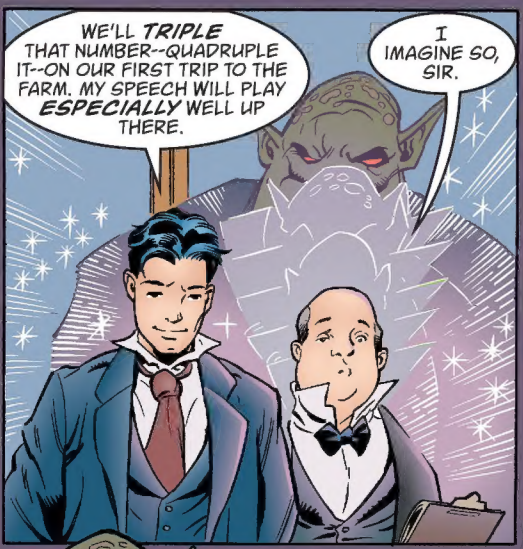
NO GOVERNMENT CAN WORK WITHOUT IT. YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO QUICK TO IMPUGN HIS CHARACTER.

POINT TAKEN.



HOW MANY SIGNATURES DO WE HAVE SO FAR, HOBBS?

67, SIR.



WE'LL TRIPLE THAT NUMBER--QUADRUPLE IT--ON OUR FIRST TRIP TO THE FARM. MY SPEECH WILL PLAY ESPECIALLY WELL UP THERE.

I IMAGINE SO, SIR.



WE'RE GOING TO NEED POSTERS--WITH LOTS OF RED, WHITE AND BLUE ON THEM. SINCE WE'VE NO FLAG OF OUR OWN, WE'LL BORROW THE PATRIOTIC COLORS OF OUR ADOPTED COUNTRY.



A FLAG OF OUR OWN MIGHT BE A NICE TOUCH, Y'GRACE.



CAPITAL IDEA, HOBBS. WRITE THAT DOWN.

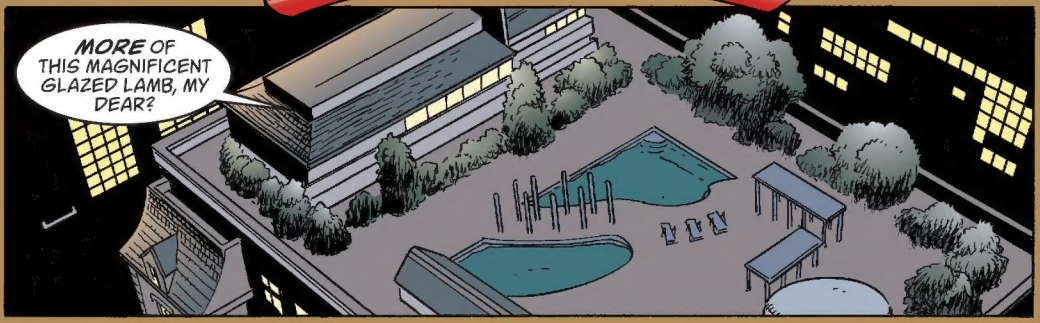
WAKE UP, GRIMBLE.



WHAT'S UP, BOSS?

I'M GOING TO BE TRAVELING FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS--MAYBE LONGER.

HERE'S WHAT I WANT YOU TO DO WHILE I'M GONE...



MORE OF THIS MAGNIFICENT GLAZED LAMB, MY DEAR?



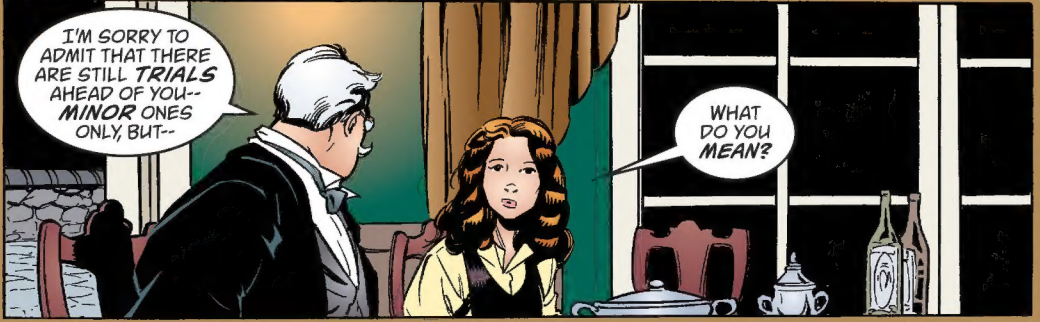
NO THANKS, I'M STUFFED.

THEN A BIT MORE WINE TO WASH IT ALL DOWN WITH?



NO, I'M FINE. REALLY. I'M NOT USED TO SUCH BOUNTY.

YOU NEED IT-- TO GET YOUR HEALTH BACK, AFTER YEARS OF NEGLECTFUL TREATMENT BY THOSE MONSTERS OCCUPYING OUR HOMELANDS.



I'M SORRY TO ADMIT THAT THERE ARE STILL TRIALS AHEAD OF YOU-- MINOR ONES ONLY, BUT--

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



BIGBY WILL HAVE TO INTERVIEW YOU. IT'S A STANDARD REQUIREMENT FOR ALL NEW ARRIVALS.

BUT DON'T WORRY. HE'S MUCH CHANGED SINCE YOUR LAST UNFORTUNATE ENCOUNTER.





WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I DON'T KNOW MISTER BIGBY. I'VE NEVER MET HIM BEFORE.

NOT AS HE IS NOW, BUT BACK WHEN HE WAS FULLY A RAVENOUS WOLF--

A WOLF?

OH MY GOD, HE WAS THE WOLF? THE ONE WHO--?

WHAT KIND OF MONSTERS ARE YOU PEOPLE?

WAIT! IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!

FIRST YOU SUBJECT ME TO THE BOY WHO ABANDONED ME TO BE RAPED AND ENSLAVED, AND NOW YOU'LL HAVE ME INTERROGATED BY THE WOLF WHO TRIED TO KILL ME?

BUT--!

THIS IS A WORLD OF MADNESS!

NEXT:
INTERVIEW WITH THE BLIND MAN



NATHAN